United Nations

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W E D N E S D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

- Security Council unanimously extends United Nations Interim Force (UNIFIL) for six months, until 31 July 1992; In a note by President of the Council, the 15 Members express concern over continuing violence in southern Lebanon..

- Security Council recommends admission of four new Member States to General Assembly.

- General Assembly to consider $200 million appropriation for UNTAC next Monday.

- In case of cease-fire in Somalia, negotiations can start, says Under-Secretary-General James Jonah upon return from Mogadiscio.

- Secretary-General appeals for emergency assistance to Horn of Africa; says leadership of United Nations is of central importance.

- Iraq stresses its compliance with terms of Security Council resolutions, urges lifting of sanctions.

- Further deterioration of human rights situation in the occupied territories in past four years, says Under-Secretary-General Jan Martenson, as Commission on Human Rights starts considering the item.

- "Grounds for hope" for least developed countries, says report by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

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In a resolution adopted unanimously, the Security Council tonight decided, among other things, to extend the present mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for a further interim period of six months, until 31 July 1992.

It also reiterated its strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized

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boundaries, and approved the overall objective of the Secretary-General, aimed at promoting the greater effectiveness of UNIFIL.

The Council also requested the Secretary-General to continue consultations with the Government of Lebanon and other parties "directly concerned with implementation of the present resolution" and to report to the Security Council thereon.

In a note by the President of the Security Council for January, Sir David Hannay of the United Kingdom, the members of the Security Council also reaffirmed their commitment to the full sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundary and expressed their concern over the continuing violence in southern Lebanon, urging all parties to exercise restraint.

The members of the Security Council also commended the Lebanese Government for "its continuous successful efforts to deploy units of its army in the south of the country in full coordination with UNIFIL", and urged all the parties concerned fully to support UNIFIL.

The Council also expressed appreciation for the continuing efforts of the Secretary-General to implement the mandate of UNIFIL and commended UNIFIL's troops and troop-contributing countries for "the sacrifices and commitment to the cause of international peace and security under difficult circumstances".

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The Security Council this afternoon cleared the way for the admission of four new Members to the United Nations. The Council took that action unanimously and without a vote in successive meetings in which members recommended to the General Assembly the admission of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia.

In another decision, Council President Sir David Hannay of the United Kingdom recommended that the application of Moldova be taken up by the Committee on the Admission of New Members to the United Nations.

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The Spokesman for the President of the General Assembly, Farouk Malawi, announced today that the Assembly will meet briefly on Monday, 4 February, to pass on to the Fifth Committee (Finance) and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) the request from the Secretary-General for an appropriation of $200 million, to fund the first phase of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

The Assembly will meet again - though not before 18 February - to take up the UNTAC question, and also to consider the appointment of two members of the International Civil Service.

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If the various parties involved in the conflict Somalia halt their hostilities, terms of a cease-fire would be negotiated following the provisions of Security Council resolution 733 (1992), Under-Secretary-General James Jonah said today. The resolution, adopted last week, calls on those involved to promote the process of reconciliation and political settlement, and for the expansion of humanitarian assistance to Somalia.

Confirmation was still being sought, he said, as to the position of General Mohammed Farah Aideed, Chairman of the United Somali Congress, but if a firm cease-fire were achieved, the Secretary-General hoped to invite the representatives of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the League of Arab States, General Aideed and Interim President Ali Mahdi Mohammed to New York for talks.

Dr Jonah said that to assist those most urgently in need of help in Somalia, $59 million in aid had been sought for the next six months. The delivery of food was an urgent priority and the United Nations had made several elaborate plans in that regard, though details still had to be resolved. Food was being delivered, but 7,000 tons had been looted. A proper food distribution network had to be worked out with the parties on the ground, lest the Organization find itself providing food for the militias instead of civilians.

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Nowhere in the world is the leadership of the United Nations more required than in the Horn of Africa, where at least 23 million men and women and children are in immediate need of assistance, said Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali at the Donors Conference on the Horn of Africa held yesterday at Headquarters. In that region, he noted, people had been forced by conflict to flee from their homes; they had suffered from extensive periods of drought; were in need to be reintegrated as productive members of society; and lacked the resources to return to their homes.

Somalia, continued the Secretary-General, was but one example of deteriorating conditions in the area. The continuing conflict in the Sudan, ethnic violence in parts of Ethiopia, recent civil disturbances in Djibouti and renewed arrival of refugees into Kenya, not mentioning the dispute between Kenya and Rwanda, underscored the painful fact that the region's tragedies were essentially man-made.

The Secretary-General urged donors to pay the same attention to the non-food requirements as to the food needs, and to give their full support to the modest initiatives for recovery included in the appeal. The humanitarian situation in the region would be reviewed again in a few months, he said.

Finally, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali stressed that the funding request of just over $600 million for the next six months, contained in the 1992 Consolidated Appeal, was totally inadequate to meet all the relief requirements and covered only those groups in most urgent need.

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In her statement, Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said that last year her agency's overall expenditures were at their highest level ever, at $845 million. An estimated $134.5 million would be needed, in her opinion, by UNHCR for the Horn of Africa in 1992.

James Grant, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), said that the importance of non-food aid must be emphasized and that some $300 million of the appeal would go to those services and needs.

William Draper, Administrator of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), noted that his agency had some 40 years of experience in the Horn of Africa. Unfortunately, he said, the development structure which had been established there had been disrupted by various conflicts.

James Charles Ingram, Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), said the burden of the humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa was particularly heavy on the Programme. Because of the long lead time required for the Horn, substantial shipment was needed to arrive in the region by April or May, he said. Therefore, donors needed to make immediate commitments, and he thanked the European Economic Community (EEC) for having already done so.

Frederick H. Weibgen, of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), pointed out that the food aid pledged must be linked with practical measures to overcome logistical constraint and facilitate delivery. Survival was not enough; it was only a threshold at which other hopes could begin.

A. Tekle, of the World Health Organization (WHO), said his agency needed an estimated $26 million for six months to address the most urgent life-threatening health problems of that region.

Jean-Paul Fallet, of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), stressed that the situation in Somalia was of the greatest concern. After being forced to withdraw temporarily last year, ICRC had re-established its presence there, but it faced enormous problems. The agency needed support in order to avoid the human catastrophe of the worst order, he said.

The appeal, which calls for $621.6 million for United Nations activities covering 1 February to 31 July, includes repatriation assistance for hundreds of thousands of refugees of the region and people who had already returned to their countries of origin. A pledge of $20 million to the Special Emergency Appeal was made during the yesterday meeting by the Government of Sweden. The representatives of Canada, United Kingdom, United States, Italy, France and Germany, as well as the Observer from the European Communities, expressed their intention to support the appeal.

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The Government of Iraq has always cooperated in implementing the measures specified in Security Council resolution 687 (1991), and it shall continue to honour its commitment towards those measures. Those established facts and figures prove that the continued imposition of the sanctions against Iraq on the basis on that resolution "does not have any legal or practical ground",

says the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, Ahmad Hussein, in a letter dated 23 January 1992 and addressed to the President of the Security Council.

Mr. Hussein also stresses that the Council is called upon to take, "in accordance with the very resolutions it adopted and the objectives set out in those resolutions", an unequivocal decision for the total lifting of the economic sanctions imposed upon Iraq. According to Mr. Hussein, the Security Council should take a deep and objective look into this matter, "away from the political objectives sought by certain countries".

He further states that refrainment by the Security Council from lifting the sanctions, at the instigation of certain countries, "will undermine the resolutions themselves and render them meaningless; and the Council will have to draw the right conclusions from such an eventuality".

Iraq also invites the Security Council to appoint a mission consisting of members "with no special pretext or objectives against Iraq" to examine these facts and present its conclusions to the Council. Iraqi is ready to receive any such mission and prepared to dispatch a high-level delegation to New York to discuss these facts.

The letter further details the steps taken by Iraq to comply with the measures specified in resolution 687 (1991), namely in the field of elimination of weapons of mass destructions - nuclear, chemical, biological - as well as on issues such as the cooperation with various United Nations inspection teams, the demarcation of boundaries with Kuwait, the return of Kuwaiti property, the repatriation of Kuwaiti nationals, and the cooperation with the United Nations Observation Mission (UNIKOM).

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Since the start of the Palestinian uprising against occupation more than four years ago, a further deterioration of the human rights situation had been observed in that area, said Jan Martenson, Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights, introducing today before the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva the item dealing with the violation of human rights in the occupied Arab Territories, including Palestine.

According to Mr. Martenson, the United Nations organs dealing with the issue had consistently stressed the need to halt the dangerous trend and to arrive through negotiations at a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Itzhak Lior, observer for Israel, pointed out that since the Commission's last session, twelve months ago, many of the old misconceptions and prejudices against Israel had disappeared, clearing the way for bilateral contacts and renewed diplomatic relations with countries from all continents. He further stated that the Commission could contribute to the effort of current Middle East negotiations by offering encouragement and support and by providing for an atmosphere of tranquillity and confidence for the negotiators.

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El Ghali Benhima, observer for Morocco, said that among the people who should benefit from the new atmosphere of détente were the Palestinians who had endured more than 40 years of Israeli occupation. According to him, the uprising in the occupied territories was a natural response to a situation which was unbearable.

Taissir Al-Adjouri, observer for Palestine, said that repeated United Nations resolutions which denounced Israel's crime against Palestinian people were attempts to cope with Israeli acts of "affronts against mankind". However, he noted, Israel had refused to comply with international community's wishes and had not stopped any of the human rights violations perpetrated against Palestinians.

Al Sherif F. Sharaf, observer for Jordan, said that the Israeli response to the Palestinian expression of their legitimate rights to resist and reject unlawful occupation had been to resort to methods of daily subjugation against the Palestinian people. According to him, various United Nations reports had documented the extent of the killings, detentions and other inhuman practices perpetrated by the Israeli authorities.

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There are "grounds for hope" about the prospects for the world's least developed countries, according to the 1991 Report on the Least Developed Countries just published by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

The report bases its optimism on the relatively high growth rates achieved in recent years in some of the 47 listed countries, and on the changing political and economic climate in the world. With the prospects brighter for settling long-standing conflicts, a peace dividend should result, the report predicts, from the redirection of resources, the resettling of hundreds of thousands of refugees and improved conditions for agricultural production.

The least developed countries have also initiated major policy changes to establish viable long-term growth. Public investment and expenditure have come under scrutiny and major fiscal reforms are being undertaken, to support the growth of trade and employment-generating activities. The report also highlights the impact of factors like gains in the purchasing power of exports, remittances from emigrants, tourism earnings and the spill-over effects of accelerated growth in neighbouring countries.

One-fourth of the countries have attained a steady improvement in living standards during the 1980s. The best performers amongst these, according to the report, are: the Maldives, Botswana, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Yemen, Nepal, Guinea Bissau and the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

But many of the least developed countries stagnated during the 1980s in terms of their per capita gross domestic product. Their development was further hampered elements such as the economic slow-down in the developed world, population growth and the effects of natural and manmade catastrophes. The per capita GDP actually declined in a number of countries, including Afghanistan, Djibouti, Togo, Sudan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Haiti, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, Mozambique, Guinea, Liberia and Niger.

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